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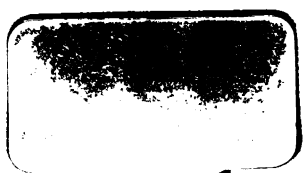
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LETTERS

FROM AN OFFICER ON BOARD

H. M. S. "PEARL,"

During her last Two Cruises

UNDER

COMMODORE GOODENOUGH, C.B.

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS.

Printed and sold for a Charitable Object.

1878.

Price 1s. 6d.

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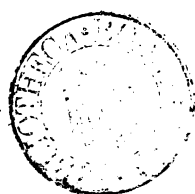
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ATTACK UPON COMMODORE GOODENOUGH, AND BOATS OF H. M. S. "PEARL."

PREFACE.

THE following Letters are printed for private circulation, to assist in raising funds for an important work of charity in the parish where the writer was born, and of which his father has been Vicar for forty-four years. The first three were written during the last two cruises made by H.M.S. "Pearl," under Commodore Goodenough, and the fourth immediately after the death of that lamented officer.

The sketches were originally made at the various places by the writer of the letters, and, after his return to England, were etched by his own hand on paper prepared for the purpose, and the etchings thus transferred to the lithographic-stones. The descriptions and illustrations are, therefore, quite genuine and authentic, which, it is hoped, will be accepted as an apology for any roughness or imperfection there may be in their execution.

The profit from the sale of the narrative will be devoted towards paying off a debt incurred in the cause of religious education by the Rev. J. N. Harrison, Vicar of Laugharne, father of the writer of the letters, under the following circumstances :—

Four years ago, an order was issued from the Education Department for increased School accommodation in the hamlet of Brook, in the

parish of Laugharne. In this place a National School had been built in 1861, and a licence having been granted by the Bishop of St. David's, Divine Service has been performed there on Sundays for about seventeen years. To provide the required additional school accommodation in a building which should also be suitable for Divine Worship, testifying by its very construction the double object which the builders contemplated, and thus perpetuating, as far as might be, their intentions, required an outlay of upwards of £400. To raise this sum by voluntary contribution in a Welsh parish was impossible. The choice lay between a School Board, or for the Vicar to make himself responsible for the expense of the building, and raise what he could in the parish. He chose the latter alternative, rather than to see, in the forty-fourth year of his incumbency and the seventieth of his age, an educational revolution, which would, in great measure, undo the labour of his life. Happily he met with a kind friend, who lent him £300 free of interest; and to this liberal friend, who has no personal connection with the parish, he is still indebted £229, to pay off which it is hoped that the sale of this narrative may contribute. It has, at least, this interest, that the letters were written by one who was by the side of Commodore Goodenough when he received his first wound.





ANEITEUM, NEW HEBRIDES.

*Monday, May 3, 1875.—Hove-to between Ambryn
Island and Pentecost.*



DARE say, since you received my last letter, you have been studying the Geography of the New Hebrides. . . . We are now kicking about here on account of two natives whom we have on board, and whom we wish to land on their native soil as soon as possible.

Probably we shall put them on shore to-morrow, and then proceed to Mota, an island of the Banks group which lies farther north. We have had very interesting times since we arrived amongst these islands.

I was unfortunate in getting an attack of my old enemy, fever and ague, which prevented my landing at Aneitum ; but I got over it in about five hours, and so was all ready for the next place we touched at.

Commodore Goodenough is very energetic, and full of go ; so when we arrived at Tanna, and he had got over his business, a general expedition was organized to visit the volcano at that island. We started about 6 A.M., and had about seven miles to march, rising about 1,000 feet. It took us about two hours and a-half, and repaid us well for our labour. The volcano was very active, the eruptions occurring at less intervals than one minute. Some of the party got rather close to the crater, but the falling red-hot cinders soon gave us a plain hint to "clear out of it." One mass fell about five yards from a "blue-jacket" on my left, and it was a case of "stand from under," until we had got away from the dangerous locality. When we had joined the main body of the party, who were placed in comparative security, we had time to admire the grandeur of the scenery. It appeared that there were at least four mouths of the crater ; the nearest to us

seemed chiefly to emit steam, sometimes in such dense volumes that it seemed quite solid ; the others emitted masses of scoria and lava, sometimes quite red-hot. Whilst in the air, these masses looked like pieces of rag flying about. Being molten, they took all kinds of fantastic shapes ; but when they fell on the side of the crater, they appeared merely as a mixture of ash and spun glass. I suppose the latter effect was really the appearance of the fused flint, or other silicious matter.

Our ascent had been somewhat tedious to me, who was out of condition, but the descent of 800 feet "in less than no time" *was* also, although you would hardly think so, rather tiring. But when you have to run down such a distance in soft ash or cinder, you can imagine that it would not be very easy.

However, when we arrived at the bottom of the crater side, we enjoyed a glorious bath in a fresh-water lake 200 feet above the sea, and afterwards tiffined.

Now came rather an amusing scene.

Our guides seemed very anxious that we should start upon our homeward journey, stating that the people in a neighbouring village were their enemies. They are all cannibals in these parts, and enjoy a roasted enemy more than any other dish they know of. We had observed men standing on the hill side some 600 yards off : these turned out to be the enemy's videttes. As soon as he understood the state of affairs, the Commodore, accompanied by a Missionary, and some others of our party, advanced to see what "the enemy" had to say ; our guide's first request being, "don't give them any tobacco."

We found the enemy really very harmless. They said that our guide had bewitched somebody in their village, and he had died, so they wanted to make war, and avenge their dead man. The Commodore told them it was "all bunkum," and they were great asses to fight for such nonsense. We did give them some tobacco, and parted very good friends. On our way down, we passed a hot lake, in which some of the men

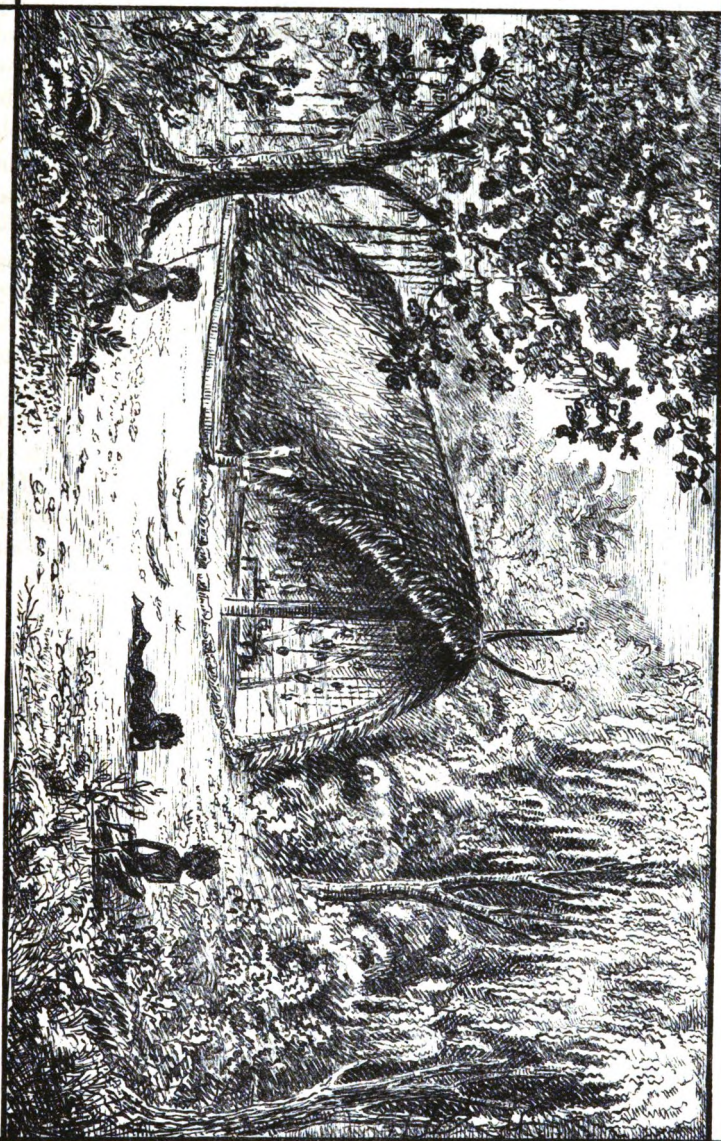
bathed; it was apparently stagnant and quite green, with a deposit of vegetable matter, but the men seemed to enjoy the bath. We got back to the ship about 4 P.M., but two men were left behind, and as there was a very remote chance of their being eaten, some trouble was taken to get them traced, but they turned up all right in a couple of hours. From Resolution Bay we sailed to Sangalie, a plantation on the same island, where we arrested the overseer for shooting a woman (as he says by accident). We shall take him to Sydney, and hand him over to the civil power. Our next visit was to Erromango, where we only communicated with a schooner employed in the labour-traffic, a business very closely resembling the slave-trade, and which it is our duty to overlook. Our next harbour was Havannah, Sandwich Island alias Vati. Here, the Commodore and a friend of his, a passenger, thought good to be benighted in the bush, and so we had any amount of excitement on their account,—sending away boats to the different plantations, firing guns, burning blue lights, sending out parties of natives, &c.

In the morning, a party of officers were just about to start, when the missing chief hailed the ship from a well-known bathing-pool, and requested that his galley might be sent ashore with a change of clothes; so we were all very much relieved, and I set about making my plans for the day. I went away with one of the lieutenants to visit plantations. We inspected two, and were very hospitably received at both. Unfortunately, the overseer at one was reported for irregularities, and sent back to Brisbane, whence he came.

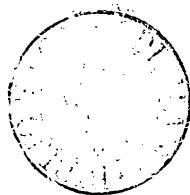
May 23.—From Sandwich (Havannah Harbour) we proceeded to Muna, or Montagu Island, where we arrived in the afternoon. The Commodore and a party landed to look into some reported misdoings of the natives, and, from the report of the village that was brought off, I was very anxious to land and see it. Accordingly, we made up a party to land at six on the following morning: we were well repaid for our trouble. The

island is peopled by a race of cannibals, who are counted some of the most savage of the group. After about half-an-hour's walk through very wild but pretty country, we came to an open space, where a lot of stems of trees were stuck up in a circular form, some being partially hollowed and decorated with rude figures, generally representing men. These are so hollowed as to give different sounds when struck, and so make music to dance to. I believe the individual logs are put up in memory of defunct heroes, or chiefs. Some way farther on we came to some huts, and among them a very large one, called Rongavai, or "Talking-house." Here the men assemble to discuss politics, &c., and drink kava: the ladies are not allowed even to witness these entertainments. The "Talking-house" was about 80 feet long and 30 wide; the roof supported by one long ridge beam, and sloping down to the ground on one side, and within about 4 feet of it on the other side. Inside it was decorated with bundles of bones of all descriptions, suspended from the roof, evidently the collection of generations. On a pair of large wooden horns at one end were two human skulls, and one of the inner beams was entirely ornamented with human jaw-bones. The natives, I think, considered us as great curiosities as we thought them, but they were quite friendly. They had no curious arms or gear worth taking as curiosities. We returned on board, and sailed about 9 A.M. for Pentecost Island.

Our business here was to take two natives home who had been illegally landed at one of the other islands. We had some difficulty in finding out on what part of the island their native village stood, but by keeping along the coast they were enabled to recognise their home. We took a man whom we picked up in a schooner to act as interpreter; but this poor wretch was in such a fright that he could only weep; his knees were knocking together, and he would not say a word. The Commodore sent for some bread for him, but he would not touch it. After much difficulty the cause of this fright was discovered: he thought that the Commo-



RONCAVAL, OR CANNIBAL CLUB HOUSE.



dore was going to eat him! He was only assured of his safety when he met the two refugees who had been on board us about a week, and knew our manners and customs. Those who witnessed the meeting of the villagers with their long-lost brethren said it was quite touching. As a rule, these savages shew very little affection towards one another, and they have no idea of shewing gratitude; in fact, I doubt if they know the sensation. If you give a present, they take it out of your hand as if you were returning something that you had borrowed. Our next anchorage was at Mota, one of the Banks' group. I am wrong in using the word *anchorage*, for the ship "*lay off*" while we were on shore.

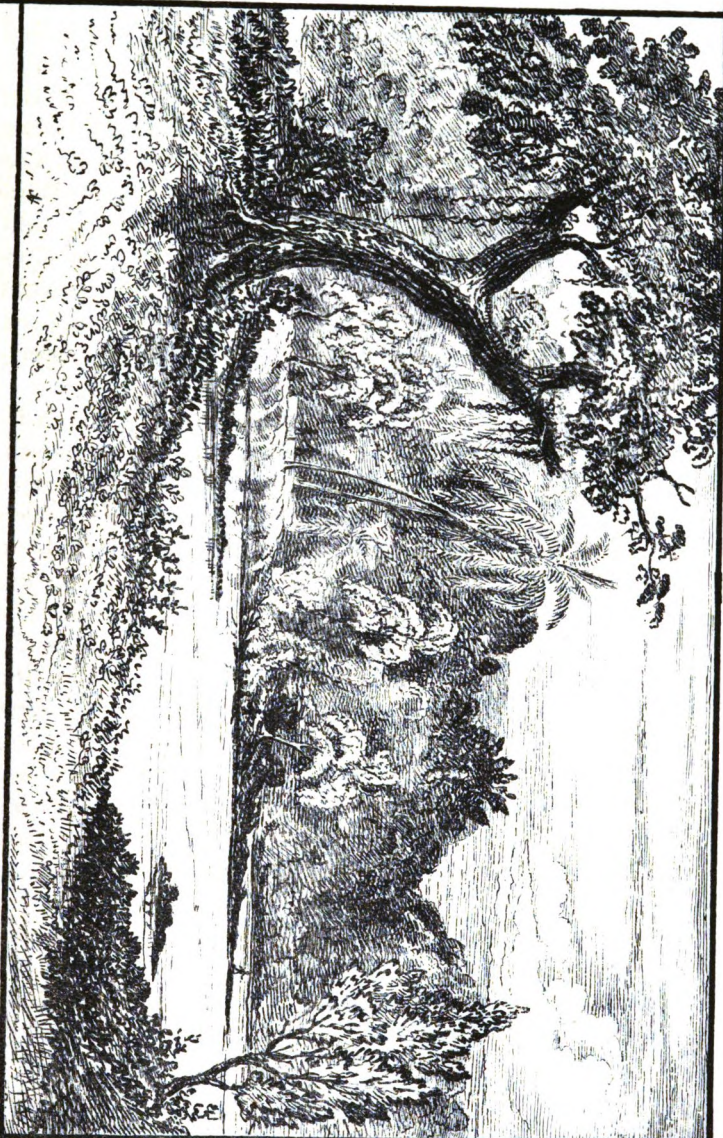
Mota is the head-quarters of the Missionary establishment. There were two black parsons there, the white having gone on a visit to some of the other islands. The church was a small hut, in a disgracefully dirty state. The island is very small, and more thickly populated than most of the group. From Mota we sailed south, but seeing one of our schooners we chased her, and went together into Port Pattison (Vanua Lava). Here we remained twenty-four hours. On Friday, May 7th, I made one of a party to visit the mountain, where we saw jets of steam issuing from the side, near the top. We walked for about three hours and a-half, and ascended about 1,000 feet, having crossed a hot-water river about knee deep, the water being a bright yellow colour, from the deposit of sulphur at the bottom. When we stopped, we had arrived at a hill with pure sulphur protruding from the side, and much vapour arising from it, which was quite suffocating in effect. We had no time to ascend higher, or we should have gone up to the source of the river, where, I dare say, we should have found the water near boiling point, as at Tannah; as it was, we were an hour late in returning to the ship. We were much delayed in our return journey, by having to wade nearly a mile through the risen tide, and sometimes arm-pit deep. Of course, we could not go

very fast. I had my sketch-book, paint-box, and mountain barometer to keep dry, besides looking out for holes under foot : beyond this we had no adventures.

We left Port Pattison the same evening, and sailed for Erromango. Here we anchored opposite the Mission-house, in Dillon-bay, had a jolly bathe in the river, and lunched with the missionary. This is one of the best-looking islands of the New Hebrides. The missionary says he has about 500 Church people (Wesleyans) in the island. This is by far the best-conditioned station I have seen. Here are buried a Mr. Gordon and his wife, who were murdered by the natives ; a brother of Mr. Gordon was killed and eaten here. Now the people are friendly, and Mr. and Mrs. Robertson seem getting on very nicely.

Having a fair wind, the Commodore decided on visiting Maré, one of the Loyalty Islands, farther south, and due east of New Caledonia. The Commodore landed, and sent the ship on twelve miles. I went on shore and got a lot of oranges, and hoped to have got some bananas, but the Commodore turned up before the people had time to bring them in. This is the first island where we have found fruit in plenty. There is a very decent stone church, and I think the Mission is thriving in the island. The people were generally *dressed*, which is more than one could accuse them of farther north. We arrived here (Sydney) on Saturday last : yesterday I went to afternoon service at the cathedral. The services at the churches here are generally low ; the Bishop, I believe, disapproves even of Hymns Ancient and Modern. I have not had time to see much of the place yet ; to-day, being the Queen's Birthday, it is a general holiday, consequently none of the shops are open. I have to attend a levée at the Governor's ; it is a great nuisance, as it will cut up the afternoon entirely.

Now for a word about the ship : she is very comfortable indeed. The Commodore is a man who has complete control over himself, and never allows himself to be seen "put out." The Commander is very



GRAVES OF MISSIONARIES, DILLON BAY, ERROMANGO.



good-natured and obliging, and the other officers all pull together very well. The mess is the most united I have seen for some time, and yet each one has his own friends on shore when time permits him to go into Society.

Monday, June 7.—We are still here, and likely to remain some days. Our departure has already been altered half-a-dozen times; now it is fixed for the 11th, Friday. The people are exceedingly hospitable here, and think nothing of putting you up for a night or two. We have six free railway passes in the ship, so that travelling does not cost anything: we are honorary members of three clubs and the Exchange, and generally get invitations to public entertainments gratis. They say, at Adelaide, one is in danger of being torn asunder by eager friends who wish to shew "civility." I cannot say that I have experienced this yet, but I hope I may do so some day.

H.M.S. "Pearl," Levuka, Fiji. June 26, 1875.

We have got thus far on our travels, and I am very much pleased with Fiji, as little as I have seen of it; it is very pretty. It is much the same style of scenery as the Seychelles, but prettier; at any rate the natives are far superior. I was entertained at my brother officer's house on shore, in the native fashion. He is head of the police here, and much liked by the native population, of whom he is a great admirer. Our entertainment consisted of native music, I believe chiefly Wesleyan hymns, but being sung in the Tongan language, it was all the same to me what was meant. Their tunes are rather monotonous, but full of good harmony. Of course the flowing bowl was freely circulated, viz., kava, but prepared in the more refined manner. It is prepared from a root which is dried and grated, and then mixed with water and strained; it produces a mixture in appearance like an extensive grey powder; it has very little flavour, but leaves a

slightly astringent taste in the mouth, which is rather pleasant: it is not intoxicating, but if drunk to excess produces paralysis of the lower limbs. It is the custom amongst the natives for the ladies to make little cigars and light them for you, by taking two or three draws themselves, and then handing them over to the favoured individual. I have never seen a more orderly lot of people anywhere, or cleaner.

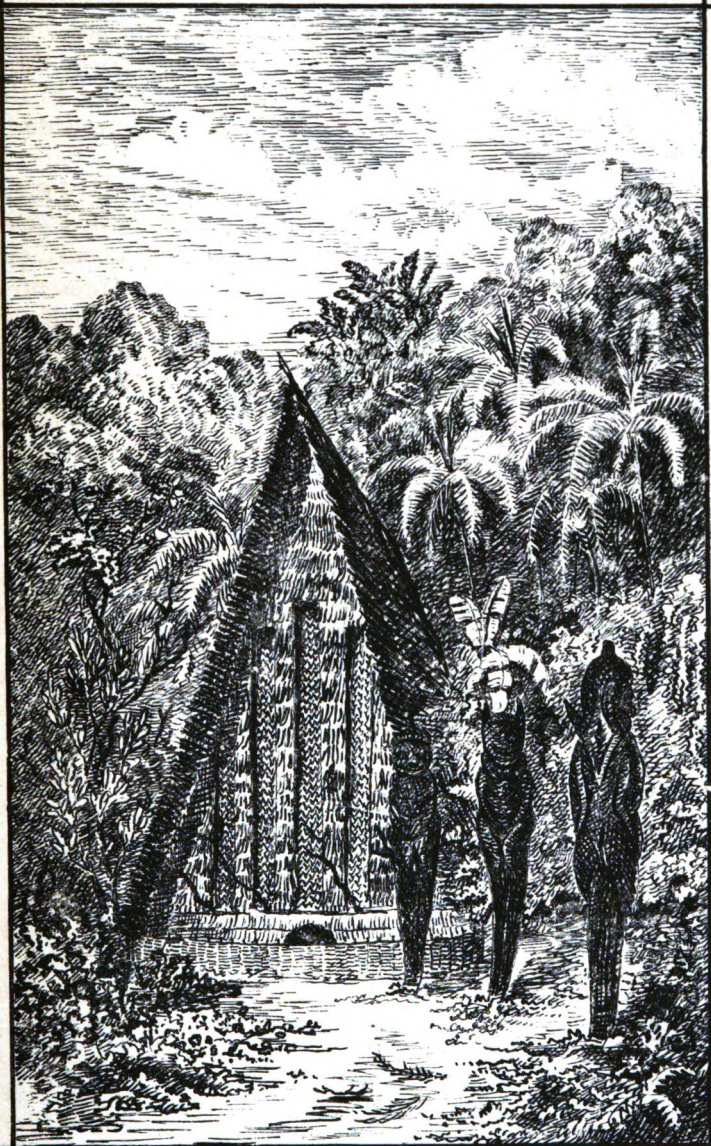
Olive, late of this ship, has some two hundred of these people under him as police; they are armed with muskets and bayonets. Yesterday, when turned out as a guard of honour for Sir A. Gordon, they presented a very handsome appearance. They went through the bayonet exercise for my edification, and got through it remarkably well. We have a delightful bathing-place here; it is on one of the mountain-streams, where a series of pools are formed with waterfalls between them, and the whole place is beautifully shaded from the afternoon sun.

It is a general meeting-place for all naval people: the Governor also has taken a great liking to the place. I shall not be able to send you more than this sheet to-day, as the mail is to close this fore-noon, and will be carried by H.M.S. "Blanche." I hoped to have sent you some Fijian portraits, but I do not think I can manage to get them in time now.

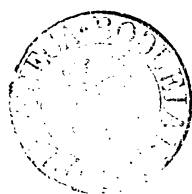
Yours, &c., &c.

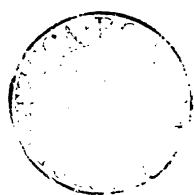
H.M.S. "Pearl," at Sea. July 31, 1875.

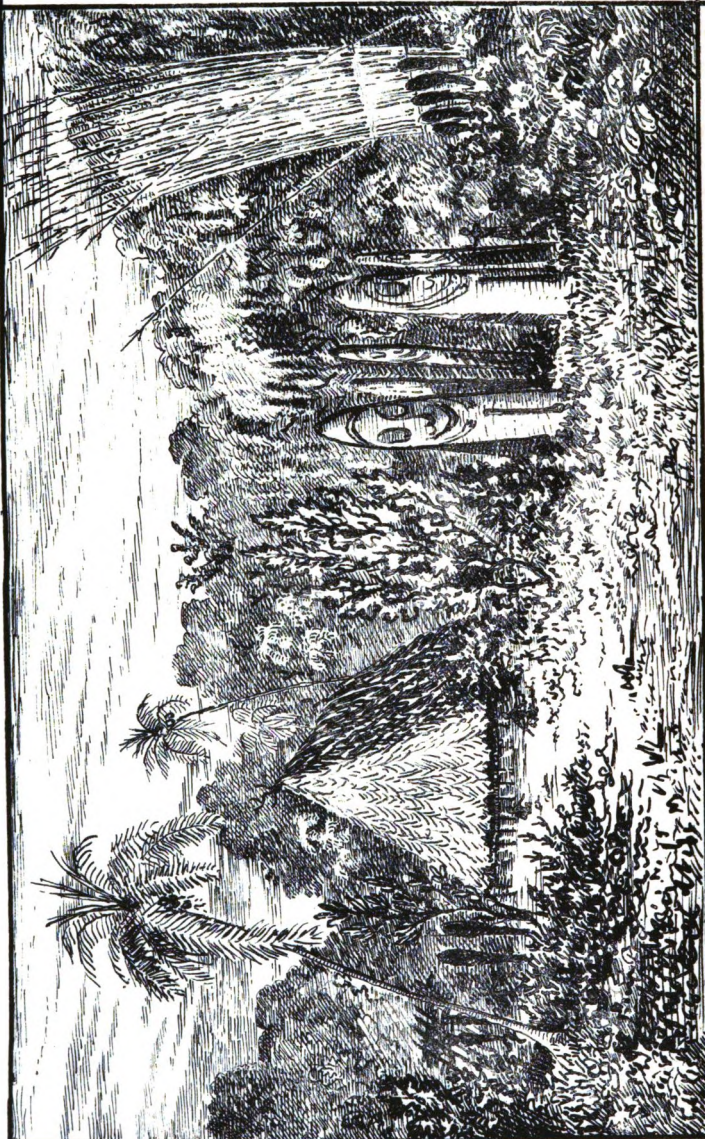
The "Sappho" will part company with us on Monday (August 2), and will carry a mail to Sydney, where she will arrive about two months before we shall. We have just left the island of Mallicollo, for a description of which see Cook's Voyages. I don't think it has changed at all; the people seem just as wild as they were 101 years ago. We only saw the men, as they had sent the women and children into safety in the bush, doubtless thinking we were going to fight. They



HUT AND IMAGES, MALLICOLLO.







MYSTERIOUS HUT AND IMAGES, MALLICOLLO.

seemed in great fear of us, and were very anxious to get rid of us whenever we visited their villages. We are now on our way to St. Bartholomew, an island between Mallicollo and Espirito Santo. I have been filling-up my sketch-book amongst these islands. The scenery is very pretty, and the villages very picturesque, and full of interesting images, whether gods, or monuments to departed friends, it is impossible to make out. The islanders of Mallicollo are decidedly cannibals, and are quite careless as to whether they eat their friends or enemies, as far as I could make out. We could not get any of them to come on board the ship, they always went through a pantomime of being knocked on the head and eaten. There is not much to be said about our cruise since we left Fiji. I went away to one of the islands of that group, and made a four days' walking-tour, which I enjoyed very much. Of course, we had to live with the natives in native fashion; but I could not enjoy eating rats in the way that I sometimes saw our hosts doing. We always lodged with the Chief of the village that we halted at; and in return for hospitality received, we had to make a present in value from one to three dollars: this ensured our being passed on to the next chief. We reached our last station, Mbau, a little island near Ovalau, on Sunday morning about 11 A.M., and could not get on, as the people would not work on Sunday. The lady, our hostess, assured us that we should have a canoe the first thing after midnight; but it came on to blow, and she told us that there was too much wind, and the men were afraid to go, so we must wait until daylight.

About 12.30 we were roused up by a lot of women shouting in our part of the house, and on turning out found the village ablaze. Luckily the wind was blowing away from our lodging, and so that part of the town was saved. The church, a building of thatch about 42 paces long, was burnt—amongst other houses, in all, some 30, and a large canoe about 60 feet long. This was the most valuable piece of property destroyed; for the huts will soon be rebuilt, but the canoes were

the work of years, and are not made at all now. When we turned out, we saw the people all standing about grinning, and not inclined to take any steps to stop the fire; but after a while we induced them to pull down a house, and throw water on some others. However they did little good, and in an hour and a-half all the damage was completed, and the people would have turned in and allowed the smouldering embers to extinguish themselves; but we pointed out the danger, should the wind change, to the rest of the village: and the head men made the people keep watch, and put out the remaining fire. Our hostess was Antiquita, daughter of the ex-king Thakambau, a jolly fat widow about 24. I was amused to see her get herself up for church on Sunday, reeking with cheap scent and cocoa-nut oil, and dressed in a black net material, with under-garments complete, apparently, short-skirted and barefooted. Next morning she appeared in her native costume—a sulu, or two yards of cloth round her waist, extending downwards a little below the knee.

Sunday, August 1.—To-day I visited the island of St. Bartholomew. The people are very friendly and civil. Their villages are composed of detached huts, each in an enclosure of reed-fencing, so that you can scarcely ever see more than one at a time. Their plantations are more tidy than is usual amongst the islanders.

Altogether they seem a contented lot of agriculturists—though determined to work as little as possible. Now I must close this dispatch, &c.

H.M.S. "Pearl," Sydney. Aug. 23, 1875.

We have returned to Sydney again, under most distressing circumstances. My last letter to you was written at sea, and forwarded from Mota by the "Sappho;" but as she only arrived here yesterday, that letter and this will travel by the same mail. I have sent you

a paper with an account of the Commodore's murder. I was standing alongside of him at the time, bargaining with a native for a bow and some arrows; his secretary was a little behind him.—I did not know that they had shot at us till the Commodore exclaimed,—“Ugh, the blackguards,” and plucked the arrow out of his side, telling us to “run and tell the others that we were attacked.” The natives followed us into the open ground, and sent several flights of arrows after us; but in less than two minutes the men had got to their arms in the boats, and opened fire on them, killing two men. One native had placed himself up a tree close over the boats, and shot an arrow into a man's leg; who, seeing where the arrow came from, brought him down after three shots with his revolver. After taking the wounded off to the ship, we returned in the afternoon and burned the village. Not that the natives will care at all for that: if we could have shot a dozen of them at the time, it might have had some effect on them. But the Commodore was so very kind-hearted, that he gave the most stringent directions to the Commander as to how the punishment was to be inflicted. Nevertheless, I know that any native that had shewn himself would have been killed half-a-dozen times over, if possible; the men were so enraged at their dastardly treachery. Luckily we saw no one.

The Commodore died on the 20th, eight days after he was wounded. On the 19th, he sent for all the officers, and said “good-bye.” He was in great pain from the tetanic spasm. He exhorted us to trust in GOD and His CHRIST, the only Being who could save. He begged pardon of any one whom he might have offended unwittingly, assuring us that he had watched and loved us as his brothers. He then asked us to kiss him, and say “good-bye;” and as I did so, he said, “Good-bye, ———, I am so glad it was not you, you were so near me.” He was constantly thinking of the other wounded men, and asking if they were suffering much pain. One or two officers were in con-

stant attendance upon him up to the time of his death, at 5.20 on Friday the 20th. He had rest for the last hour before his death, and seemed almost to be asleep at the time. Yesterday, the 24th, the Commodore and the two men were buried on the north shore. Their graves were dug, side by side, the Commodore's being in the centre. Everybody attended; Mrs. Goodenough has behaved most nobly throughout this great trial; she followed her husband to the grave with her two little boys, one on either side, each carrying a cross of flowers. It was a most affecting scene. The day before the Commodore died, he was carried out of the cabin on to the quarter-deck, and wished the men "good-bye." He shook hands with all the petty officers, for each of whom he had some kind word. I hope one and all will strive to live as he has lived, that they may be able to die as happily. The P. and O. mail has arrived, but I have received no letter by it, so I presume that you have not written. Mrs. Goodenough is coming on board on Sunday, as she wishes to see the officers before leaving for home. Yesterday she received a telegram of condolence from Her Majesty. Everybody at Sydney is kind, as usual. I think of taking two or three days' leave, and of going up country to see some of the sights in the neighbourhood, so I shall conclude this at once,

With much love, &c.

